

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Harriet Kauwe, 52, lei seller

"You know, us Hawaiians, we'll never be millionaires. But that's all right. We're happy because we get so much love, you know, within us. There's so much love that I think that's what makes us Hawaiians."

Harriet Kauwe, Hawaiian-Portuguese, was born June 18, 1933 in Kaka'ako, O'ahu. Her mother, Hattie Ka'ehu'ana'ole Kalili, is Hawaiian from Lā'ie. Her father, Joseph Fernandez Serrao, was the son of a Portuguese immigrant.

For the first six years of her life, Kauwe was raised on Cooke Street, where she was exposed to a tradition of lei selling which involved the entire household. They sold leis on the waterfront and Downtown.

In 1938, the Serraos moved to Damon Tract where Harriet attended Kaloaloe Elementary. Her father worked for the City and County of Honolulu as a road supervisor. The family continued their lei selling business. Later, they moved to Kalihi where Kauwe attended Fern Elementary, Kalākaua Intermediate, and graduated from Farrington High in 1951.

Shortly after the move to Kalihi, her mother moved her lei business to Lagoon Drive near the airport. The new location proved to be advantageous.

After marrying John Kauwe, she continued to help her mother while raising five children. When her mother retired in 1965, Kauwe took over the business, Harriet's Lei Stand. She still runs it today.

Kauwe is an active member of the Mormon Church.

Tape No. 14-4-1-85 and 14-5-1-85

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Harriet Kauwe (HK)

September 24, 1985

Kailua, O'ahu

BY: 'Iwalani Hodges (IH)

IH: This is an interview with Harriet Kauwe at her home in Kailua, O'ahu, Hawai'i on September 24, 1985. Interviewer is 'Iwalani Hodges.

Okay, Mrs. Kauwe, can we start out by asking you when you were born?

HK: Oh, June 18, 1933.

IH: And where was this?

HK: That was in Kaka'ako. My grandmother was a midwife and she delivered. She was there to deliver me.

IH: Did she deliver all of your brothers and sisters?

HK: She delivered all of us except my youngest sister and the brother below me. She was at the pier selling leis and my dad was home, and he had to deliver my brother. It was a challenge, but he was there. And after all was done, he went and got my grandmother, come home. By then, the afterbirth was still in. (Chuckles) But my sister, being the youngest after twelve years, she was born in St. Francis Hospital. So, she was the only one born in the hospital.

IH: What is your grandmother's name?

HK: My grandmother's name is Caroline Kamakea Kauwe.

IH: And that's the one who delivered you?

HK: Yeah, uh huh.

IH: Is that your mother's mother?

HK: That's my mother's mother, yes.

IH: What are your parents' names?

HK: My father's name is Joseph Fernandez Serrao. He's pure Portuguese.

And my mother is Hattie Ka'ehu'ana'ole--Kalili is her maiden name--Serrao. She's pure Hawaiian.

IH: Is your father from Portugal?

HK: No. My grandparents [John Fernandez Serrao and Marie Jose] from Portugal. I can't remember the ship, but they came over here on a ship. And they met here. They got married and there were about nine children. It's sad because we didn't know the ship, so we cannot find out what part of Portugal they came from. But I know their names. My grandfather's name was John Fernandez Serrao before he died. But before that, they put Serrao in the middle. It was John Serrao Fernandez.

IH: Why did they switch that?

HK: Well, I don't know why. Maybe they're like the Hawaiians (chuckles), they change their names. But as the years went by, they change it and put Serrao as the last name. So all his sons, all carry Fernandez for their middle name. My father's brother's all had, like Steven Fernandez, and Albert Fernandez, John Fernandez, and Frank Fernandez, and my dad Joseph Fernandez.

IH: Oh, that's interesting.

HK: Yeah, it is. All my father's side is all gone except for one sister. She's in a nursing home in California, and she's, oh, maybe about ninety-five years old now. That's the last of that clan over here except for us younger ones.

IH: How many children were in your family?

HK: In my immediate family?

IH: In your immediate family, your brothers and sisters?

HK: Oh, there was one, two, three, four, five brothers, and two girls.

But my second brother, he passed away when he was five months old. And then my youngest brother, he passed away. He was the one that always help me at the lei stand. My brother Clarence, he helped me at the lei stand. He passed away. So, today, there's my oldest brother Joseph, and my second brother Albert, and my brother below me, John, and my sister Josephine.

IH: So where are you in that family?

HK: I'm number four.

IH: Four of seven.

HK: Yeah, uh huh.

IH: What were your parents doing when you were born?

HK: My father worked for city and county. He worked for their road department. He drove the sweeper. My mother, well, she was a lei seller. She sold leis down at the pier, and my father was a help to her.

IH: How did he help her?

HK: Well, after work, he was the one that got all of us kids. I mean, we were pretty young, then, till we moved. And then, we were able to help string leis. But he went down to the pier and help her get the flowers going and all that.

IH: That's when you still lived in Kaka'ako?

HK: In Kaka'ako, yeah.

IH: Who took care of the children?

HK: Well, we stayed home with my grandmother. But my dad worked early, so he was always off in--you know, he was always able to take care of us when my mother wasn't there to help, when she was selling leis. But my mother was the one that stayed home with us, until the boat came in, then there was everybody at the pier.

IH: Was your grandmother still going [to meet the boat to sell leis]?

HK: My grandmother, yeah. My grandmother, yeah, she was still going. She always went to the pier for long time as I could remember. We moved down to Damon Tract. I think I was about five or six years old. And my grandmother was still going to the pier and selling. That was as a kid, I remember, it was really something.

IH: Can you explain how they prepared their leis to go to the boat? How did they pick up their flowers and where did they string their leis?

HK: Well, you know what, when we were able to help my mom and dad, my father used to drive us around because they didn't have flowers like they have today. What we did, we went as far as Waipahu and Schofield [Barracks]. Along the highway, they have bougainvilleas and they had this hibiscus. We used to pick all. I mean, we used to (chuckles) kind of hide because it's on the highway. But these are flowers that we used to have. We used to pick plumerias. But when we moved to Damon Tract, we planted about forty or fifty trees of crown flowers. We raised our own nasturtiums and our own marigolds--'ōkole'oi'oi, that. These are the flowers that we used. As kids, we really worked hard because we had to pick all those flowers.

IH: Did you buy any flowers?

HK: Yes, my mother them bought from farmers at Kuli'ou'ou. It's just below the Lunalilo Rest Home, in that area. That's where all our

carnations came from. We used to go up there, and all the other type of flower, like the blue hydrangeas and the pansies and the gingers and gardenias, all came from Mānoa. In those days, that's where the farm was, in Mānoa. So, we used to go up there and get all the flowers.

IH: Do you remember the names of any of the farmers?

HK: Ah, it's really hard. Lot of the carnation farmers were all Koreans. They weren't Japanese, they were Korean farmers. I really can't think of their names.

IH: What about the ones in Mānoa?

HK: Mānoa, yeah, was Mrs. Suzuki. She was the ginger lady. I mean, they had. And, oh, gosh. I really can't think. But she was one that really supplied a lot--the gardenias and. . . . In fact, she had all the different flowers, you know.

IH: Did you make gardenia leis?

HK: Oh, yes. We had gardenia. We made gardenia leis.

IH: Was that popular before?

HK: Yeah, because that was the most flowers we had, gardenias and gingers. I mean, that was it. We don't have flowers like we have today, the tuberose. If we did have, was so little, you can't, you know. . . . And was carnations. Those days, we don't buy carnations by per flower. We bought 'em by the boxes. That, you get so much more.

IH: What, now days, you buy it per flower?

HK: Per flower, yeah. You know, per flower. It has changed a lot in so many years. I remember when I was a teenager, the orchids, the thousand orchids were three dollars. Now, we pay thirty dollars. During the winter, we pay as high as forty dollars per thousand. So you can see how many difference it is, you know. Back in those days, there was so much vandas that they used to call it the orchid war. "You buy 1,000 for three dollars, and we give you another 1,000." That's how much flowers had then, you know. But now, they have so many different types of orchids. Dendrobiums. But yet, the price is so high. Interesting.

IH: So, when you were living in Kaka'ako, were your parents and grandmother going down to Kekaulike Street to sell leis . . .

HK: Just my mom them went then. My grandmother really didn't go to Kekaulike. When we moved to Damon Tract [in 1938], this is when my mother start going to Kekaulike, and going to Waikiki to sell leis.

IH: Oh, not until you moved to Damon Tract?

HK: To Damon Tract, yes. When my grandmother was around then, all she did was go to the boat and sell her leis. The way they used to sell, it's just get their hands full of leis, their arms full of leis. And I could hear them say, "Ten for dollar." You know, that type. You do have lot of people that come to the lei stand, "Where that ten for dollar type?"

"Oh, that's long gone already."

(Laughter)

IH: Oh, even today, they're asking?

HK: Oh, even today, you have the old-timers that come. "Where's those days that was ten for dollar? Here an armful for two dollars." You know.

(Laughter)

HK: That's real fun.

IH: Did you used to go down to the waterfront?

HK: Oh, yeah. But I just used to sit down and string leis. My mother is the one that used to go because she was on--I think for you to sell leis down at the pier or the waterfront, you had to be tough, because you have all these lei sellers. I remember Martina [Macalino of Martina's Lei Stand], her mother is Agnes Makaiwi. She was always the president of the [Hawaiian Lei Sellers] Association there. She was a beautiful lady, but she was tough. You know, lei business, it's just as competitive now as it was then. You want to make money, you got to work for it. I used to watch that, and I says, "Oh, wow, I can't do that."

(Laughter)

HK: That wasn't my style. I guess I was more like my dad. But my youngest brother Clarence when he helped me at the lei shop all the time, that was part of his life. And he enjoyed it. He used to go out with my mom.

IH: Was your mother aggressive?

HK: My mother, very aggressive. Very, very. She was very aggressive. So, she can go in there and just get at it. I was different. I couldn't see myself plowing in because we have about five, six lei sellers coming in, going right to the tourist. And you gotta be fast because--I watched my mom there--if you can get your arm of leis into this guy's arm of leis, you've made a sale. But if you're slow, and the other lei seller get her armful of leis on top of his arm, then you're out of luck, you know. That's the way it was. I used to watch. I remember those days. Was really something, you know. (Chuckles) My brother was like that. He enjoyed it. You

have to enjoy it to be able to sell your leis, your garlands of leis, you know, have to.

IH: How many lei sellers would there be down there at one time?

HK: Oh, you have a whole bunch. I think that was their living for lot of old-timers. I can't remember really how many, but there was a whole bunch. Maybe about forty of them, just lined up. And then, when the boat come in, they have to--whoever come first stand right there by the beginning. You see, alongside the pier, you can sell your leis. But whoever comes first, get to be first in line. And it goes right down the line. So, my mom used to go early. And you'd be surprised, she never get there first because somebody was always there first.

(Laughter)

HK: I could see all of the lei sellers all standing right alongside the pier because first come, first served, you know. (Laughs) That was such a pretty sight to see. And lot of them wore their hats, which made it so nice. You know, so nice.

IH: Did they all wear muumuus?

HK: Yeah, they all wore their muumuus. They don't wear pants like they do now. Everybody had their muumuus and their big pāpales--you know, their hats with all. . . . They all had leis on their hats. So, it made it really an attractive sight. That's so pretty when you think about that.

IH: Were they regulated down there?

HK: What do you mean?

IH: Well, did they have rules and regulations for the lei sellers? They had to stand in a line or something like that?

HK: Oh, yeah. That's why, whoever came first would be the first one in line. Because when the people come out, they come out from inside of the pier. You cannot go inside of the piers. You have to stand outside. So, whoever got there first, when the people coming out, they'll be the first one to catch a sale. But then, you could sell inside of the park.

IH: Irwin Park?

HK: Yeah. Then this is where my mother them at times would sell in the park. Especially if the boat is coming in, so lot of the people are going there to greet them. Their friend's coming in, so chances are better that way, too. So, that was exciting. Really.

IH: Were there a lot of children there?

HK: Oh, yeah. I think all the lei sellers, all their children were there to string the leis. Because we had all of our--what you call that? Hāli'is? What you call that blanket that we . . .

IH: Hāli'is. Yeah, hāli'is.

HK: . . . yeah, we put down, and we have all the flowers up there. Because we string, and then my mother would come back. So, we had a whole bunch of families that would be sitting around under the trees in the park. And then, when they don't have enough leis, they come back, "Hurry up, hurry up, you kids." And then, we used to string.

IH: Did you have to string at home first to prepare for the boat?

HK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then, when there's a bigger group coming in, my mom used to call home to my dad. This is when my father would offer us a big can of peaches. Said, "Your mom need leis, and this is the treat." And boy, it was a treat. But we sit down, and we string first.

IH: String all your leis?

HK: We string all our leis. Sometimes my brother used to pick the crown flowers and put 'em in the bathtub inside the bathroom. In those days, the bathtubs are deep, you know. (Chuckles) So, fill up with crown flowers. And you know, they're tiny. So, that's a lot of flowers.

IH: Oh, no. (Chuckles) So many leis.

HK: But my dad used to pull down. We used to fill up needles, and my dad used to pull down all the leis. That was done real fast. But we didn't mind it, because afterwards, we had that can of peaches. And, oh, that was a treat and a half. A real treat. And then, if my mom made good, one weekend, she would treat us to Kewalo Theater.

IH: Kewalu?

HK: Kewalo. It's right on Cooke Street. That would be a treat. Another treat for us. Oh, my mother would say, "Okay, we made good today." So, get all of us, we'd go there for a movie. And then, we would drive to that bakery, Liberty Bakery in Kalihi. Right across Farrington High School. My dad used to stop there, buy some hot bread and some cold ham and some pure butter. And we go home, we have hot chocolate with that. Oh, that was another treat besides (chuckles) the can peaches. So, we didn't mind working because we were treated. But it was hard work because we had to pick our own flowers. We had to go around, do all those things.

IH: Having to work together like that as a family, does that keep your brothers and sisters always close?

HK: Very close. Till today, we're very close. We're very close.

Because we always helping one another. Even as we graduate from high school. My brother them all worked, helped at the lei stand. But gradually as they get married, well, they got jobs. They had families, so they have to work. Not that much people can live on just the lei business alone. You have to get a second job like. So, gradually, their wives work and all that, so there was only me and my brother [Clarence], really. My sister [Josephine] was too young then. So, that was. . . .

IH: So, if I can ask you one more question about Kaka'ako. Do you remember the house you lived in?

HK: Yeah. Well, my grandfather [Gustave Kaleohano Kalili], that was his building like, you know.

IH: He owned the building?

HK: He was the landlord. In the back they have, where my grandparents lived, they had--it was just a long, big lanai. Lanai, what do you call it? Lanai, yeah.

IH: Mm hmm, lanai.

HK: And then, this is where they lived. And then, on the side of it had a two-story house. We lived on the top level. That was right on Cooke Street. So, when I pass there, I tell my kids, "Well, I think is just about the area where your tūtū man had his home. We lived Kaka'ako."

I know, when they had a depression, my dad used to scoop mosquito fish because no more food, eh? No more money. And then, this is what they used to make and cook. That's why, my father, as he gradually grew older, he was more Hawaiian than my mom because he ate all kind of Hawaiian food (chuckles). He had to learn how to eat it like that.

IH: Okay, so you moved to Damon Tract . . .

HK: Yeah.

IH: . . . about 1938? You said when you were about five years old?

HK: Yeah, I was five, six, yeah.

IH: Why did you move there? Why didn't you stay at Cooke Street?

HK: Well, cannot because we started to have our family grew. And then, this is when my father said, "We should move so we can plant our own flowers." You know, because he used to drive us all around. When we moved to Damon Tract, this is when we plant all the crown trees. It was a better life. It was more like a farm life. Because we had our own vegetables, we had our own chickens. We had couple of pigs.

IH: Oh, you had a pretty big lot, then, in Damon Tract?

HK: Yeah, we had about an acre and a half. We used to pick our own eggs. So, you know, it was an exciting life as a child. You really appreciate things like that. We had turkeys. Kind of difficult to raise because they're not like chickens. So, we sustain our own self when come to food.

IH: When you moved to Damon Tract, you moved as a family, just your parents and your brothers and sisters?

HK: Yeah, uh huh.

IH: And so, when you were living in Kaka'ako, was it more than your family and your grandparents?

HK: Yeah, well, there was somebody else downstairs. I really don't know if my aunties lived there. But when we moved to Damon Tract, my Auntie Sophie [Sophia Ventura of Sophia's Lei Stand] them moved down there, too. So, we all had flowers to grow because my mother them were lei sellers. So, they were really something.

IH: How many in your mother's family were lei sellers?

HK: Well, my uncle, my mother's brother.

IH: What was his name?

HK: Gus Kaleohano [Kalili]. And then, my Auntie Sophie, and my mother. I think that was it, if I can remember. Because that's the one that always was around. My Auntie 'Imi [Ka'imi Marrotte] was hānaied by someone else, and then later on, when I was little older, then she came around to help. But she was never in it like my mom, and Auntie Sophie, and Uncle Gus. She was never in it like that. Because she was hānaied by someone else, their life was not like our life then. But gradually, as the years went by, then she came to help my mom, my Auntie Sophie, and worked with it.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

IH: Okay, so was it after you moved to Damon Tract that you folks went to the Lagoon Drive? The lei stand?

HK: No, when we moved to. . . . Gee, we were living in Kalihi then. We moved to Kalihi [in 1944].

IH: Oh, so the time you were living in Damon Tract . . .

HK: That was all waterfront. We just sell leis solely at the waterfront.

IH: Oh, I see. And what about Waikīkī and Kekaulike [Street] . . .

HK: Waikīkī, then we moved. I think we moved to Kalihi, then, because I

was just in the sixth grade when we moved to Kalihi. That was in World War II. This is when we started to get not much ships during the World War II. So, what we did was sell leis at Kekaulike [Street] and my mom used to sell leis at the Maluhia [military club] where that recreational facilities for the service people.

IH: Is that where . . .

HK: Was just in Waikīkī.

IH: . . . Fort DeRussy is today?

HK: Yeah, yeah, yeah, uh huh. This is where they used to have all their dances. We used to be parking in our cars with our lei stands in the back. And park right in the front. We used to go there mostly when they had dances.

IH: Did you still sell leis during the war?

HK: At Maluhia. They do have lei stands in Waikīkī, but not like they had then with the cars.

IH: But during World War II, were you folks still selling leis?

HK: Yeah, yeah, uh huh. We go up there because a lot of the service guys used to come over here for R and R [rest and recreation] or something. And they used to have their dance and socials, so we used to go out there and sell leis. This is where we made our money. And then, my mom used to sell leis at Pearl City Tavern. That's all during World War II and after.

IH: But during the war, did your parents do any war-related work?

HK: My mom, yeah. She worked at Pearl Harbor, defense worker. She worked in the warehouse. But she still used to sell leis. She used to come home with her overalls working in there. She used to be part of the defense work at Pearl Harbor.

IH: And what did she do?

HK: I'm not sure what she did, but she worked in the warehouses. I don't really know what she did there. But all I know, she wore that overall pants, so must be working (laughs) hard.

IH: But she still sold her leis?

HK: Oh, yeah. We still sold our leis. And in the evenings, she would go to. . . . If there's no dance at Fort DeRussy [Maluhia], there was dance at Pearl City Tavern. She would go there, and we would be sitting in the car. You know, we used to have an old station wagon, that board-type station wagon. When she run short of leis, she comes to the car, and my dad used to say, "Hurry up, hurry up, your mommy needs some more leis." We used to string in the car and

give it to her. So, all my life, that's all I really did, was string leis.

(Laughter)

IH: So, when she went to the dances to sell leis, was that military people or local people?

HK: No, majority was defense workers and military. You know, when they come over, there's a lot that came over to rest. And defense workers from the Mainland, all that. They did that for entertainment. The story that my mom told me that these people have to get it off their chests, like. And that's the only way they did, was just come to the dance. I guess they drink and all that stuff. But it was something to ease whatever pressure they're carrying. So, these are the experiences even I had. I mean, we sit in the car. Even when they had the draft--you know, when they were drafting all these people, these guys, for World War II--we used to go down to the draft board. At Waipahu they used to have that Alvah Scott.

IH: What is that?

HK: Alvah Scott Elementary in Waipahu. Lot of the drafts were down that end. We used to string a whole bunch of leis, and still take all the leftover flowers and go down there and string. Because people used to buy for all their sons that got drafted and had to go away. So, when I think back, there was always different occasions during that time that we strung leis and my mom sold for that. So, leis were not only for social. It was things like that. Sometimes, it was sad, too.

IH: So, it sounds like you folks moved all around in your lei selling.

HK: Mm hmm [yes]. Till we got to the airport [in 1945]. And that way, we can kind of stay. But in those days when we didn't have boats or didn't have little functions, we rested. When we got to the airport, it was an everyday thing. It was work every day. It's not where, "Oh, no boat today, we can relax today." Life changed then. It was more work. There was more for us to do. But I was younger then, we were glad when they didn't have a ship come in. Because then, ho, day off for us.

(Laughter)

HK: Now, it's seven days a week. (Laughs)

IH: Do you know what made your mother, and your Auntie Sophie, and Uncle Gus start selling down at the airport?

HK: [HK mishears question.] The year, I'm not sure. I'm really not sure what year they started.

IH: But do you know what prompted them to go there?

HK: Well, I'm not sure. It's just that, I think my uncle didn't have any place. He noticed---before, they had the Mars. They call it the Mars, this big navy ship, airplane [seaplane]. That used to carry a lot of military people back and forth. That happened one time, my uncle went. I think he did put up a stand and he made money. This is when my auntie heard about it and she call my mother, "Come on, I think we have a good thing here." So, my mother them got their car. And had all these jalopies. We just built a stand on. No more electricity over there [Lagoon Drive]. Just a dark road and don't even have street lights. What we have is gas lanterns. We hang it onto the stand, maybe two gas lanterns per stand. This is how it started. Just by experience, "Oh, let's take a chance." Because somehow my uncle knew there was a lot of transients going back and forth. And the Mars was the big airplanes [seaplane] that really carried a whole bunch of guys.

IH: So were they your first customers down at the airport?

HK: More so, yeah. More so, they were. Those were the ones that really start buying. And then, gradually, we found out, wow, this should be a good thing. So, my auntie and then my mother, and then pretty soon, naturally, they [the other lei sellers] was wondering, "Where's Sophie and Hattie and Gus?" The other lei sellers thought, "What happened to them? Something must be up." So, gradually, the people start finding out. Lei sellers start finding out, and they gradually added. When we went to about as high as fifteen cars right down the line, and everybody with their gas lantern, till finally, the state [territory] decided that they didn't want us on the street. They put us in. . . . They built grass shacks [in 1952].

IH: Was there any problem of other people coming in?

HK: I don't think so. I can't remember we having any problems.

IH: Because I know, like you said, the lei sellers were always very competitive.

HK: Yeah, yeah.

IH: So, I thought, maybe, because they had found the spot, your family, that maybe they wouldn't feel so good about other people coming in.

HK: Well, there were times if we do have one that's funny, then we'll tell him. My Auntie Sophie especially would say, "Listen, we're the one that discovered this place. We're the one that started here." So, you know, kind of make them realize that, "Don't try to be authority or use your authority around here because we're the one, the first one that came." But for really bad problems, no, I don't think it was that much. I can't remember that far back. But they ended up with about fifteen because the state [territory] had to build fifteen stalls, grass shacks. And then, when we moved the other side [in 1962, when the new terminal was built], they had fifteen. And then, now, we have twelve. [The last move was in 1978].

IH: So, when the state [territory] built the grass shacks for you folks, was it the same people who were on the cars moved right into the grass shacks?

HK: Yeah, uh huh. The same people. Yeah, was the same people. Not the same people today. Lot of the old folks have passed and gone. You know, the very first ones that was there. Like Bessie's Lei Stand, used to have--I can't remember their name, but the stand used to be Emma's [Sam and Emma Keli'i]. Real Hawaiian people, her and the husband. He was kind of a crippled man. But both she and the husband had that lei stand. There was another one further. Irene's Lei Stand was for somebody else, I can't remember the name. And there was another stand that Kaleikini used to run. But when they moved to the second building, second time, then the old folks had passed on and Bessie [Watson] took over. Because Bessie was working for these people, and then she took over. And then, the other side, Kaleikini, well, when the mother died, the kids didn't continue on, so somebody else.

IH: Took over?

HK: Took over, yeah. So, you really don't have all the same people that. . . . Because we all got old, that's why. (Laughs) We're all getting old. Yeah, lot of the old folks have gone because it has been a long time.

IH: Yeah, it has.

HK: Really been a long time.

IH: Do you see a change in way the business is run since the old folks have gone? Like you're second-generation already at the airport, and then I think most of the stands are second and third generations. Is there a difference in the way the business is run since the young ones have taken over?

HK: I don't think so. I think it's the same thing. I don't think any of us will be millionaires, because too much aloha, you know, (chuckles) in us. I don't know, Hawaiians get too much love. There's time if the leis get one day, two day old, you know, you buy one, we always give. And then, we see somebody we didn't see long time, oh, we put a lei on. So, we used to laugh a lot. We sit down, we go, "You know, us Hawaiians, we'll never be millionaires. But that's all right. We're happy because we get so much love, you know, (chuckles) within us." And I think that's the main thing. I guess my mom was like that, too. There's so much love that I think that's what makes us Hawaiians.

Like today, my mom, she's in Lunalilo Home. She always wanted to go there. When my dad passed on, she said, "That's my home. I want to go there." But she stayed with us for a while. And she come down the lei stand and help. She used to come down and work with me because that was her life, stringing leis. It got to a

point that she couldn't even tell colors. I say, "Mama, string three yellow plumeria and three pink."

"Okay. All right, all right."

When you look, she have maybe about five yellow and one pink, you know. And then, I would tell her, "Ma, I told you three, three."

"All right." And she look at the lei, she go, "This is pretty."

I go, "Oh, Ma, string it. As long as you say it's pretty, string it."

She say, "That's all right. You give 'em. When somebody come, you give aloha."

And that's the way I was brought up. I mean, that's what makes life, to have so much love, you know.

IH: But how have the Hawaiians been able to make the lei selling a business for themselves--to make money and to continue the business for themselves?

HK: Oh, we ended up making lot of [return] customers. That's what keeps us going, your customers, and the new people that comes over to the lei stand. Like now, we do meet a lot of tourists. And being in the business so long, you do have customers. Like today, lot of our customers are military. Military people, they go back and forth. And when they move here, they have lot of families that come and visit them.

Naturally, the local people. Because when they have all these special occasions, the Hawaiians got to put the lei on. Got to make pretty, you know. (Chuckles)

IH: But like you say, you always gave away so much.

HK: Yeah, we give, but we still . . .

IH: But then, as a business . . .

HK: We still make money, though, you know. But like I said, we're not going to make so much money that we'll have a whole abundance of it. I said, but we do make money to sustain our business, you know, to go on and take care ourselves and live pretty good, I would say. I say, but we do. Because you have to buy a lot of flowers to have leis. You have to buy sometimes every day or every other day. But then you still have extra leis, you know. And then, when you have a good customer that comes all the time, he's the one that's taking care of you. When he buy, you always give him one for his neck. That's where he says, "Oh, we'll be back. Don't worry." But this is what I mean, when you have the aloha. This is how you got to treat your customers to show them you appreciate their business, because that's what keeps us going. But we do. There are slow

times. Like now, September month is our slow month. This is why they moved Aloha Week in September, but same thing.

(Laughter)

IH: Oh, Aloha Week is not bringing you business?

HK: No, September, I think, will always be our slow month. September, October, November, that's our slow months. And December, maybe the third week of December, then start picking up again. This is when people come and time for relax and all that. But this is our slow month. No matter what you do, it's slow. That's when you try to relax a little bit, but then your business still has to go on.

IH: You know, I was wondering, what is it about lei selling that Hawaiians have been able to make it? Make a go of it, to make it a business for themselves. Because Hawaiians, traditionally, are not business people, right? And yet, lei selling, it's a different case. Aren't they all Hawaiians that are lei selling? I mean, before, wasn't it all Hawaiians selling leis?

HK: Oh, we had some Chinese people, too, you know. They had just . . .

IH: On the waterfront?

HK: Yeah. They had some old-time Chinese people then. But I guess they see money in it. So, as the years go by, you learn little more, see. My mother never even went to school, but then she learned how. You gradually learn when you still working in the business. I just graduated high school, but I learned from working with my mom, and kind of helping her run the business. Because you can make money. You can't make a whole big amount of money, but you can make enough money to sustain yourself. But yet, you have to know what you're doing, too, now. You cannot buy so much flowers and throw away so much flowers. You got to know what to buy and how to buy. Because sometimes if you don't know this, you can just go in a hole. I guess it's like any business. If you don't know how to run, then you really lose out. Especially flowers, they're very perishable, you know. So, I've learned that.

Sometimes, well, it's lot of chance business. Because sometimes, you have all these leis and no more business. And one time you don't have leis and business is so good. So, this is where you learn to always keep an amount where you can make money. So when the business is good, you get the leis. And if the business is no good, then you still have the amount where you're not going to go in a hole like. But then when it's real good, then you make money. I've learned. This is what I've learned.

Because when I first took over, my mother retired, oh, was sad because I didn't know what I was doing. Even if I worked with my mom, but she was the one that really ran the business. I didn't know what I was doing. I had to use my husband's paycheck to pay

flowers. And he go, "What are you doing?"

I said, "Well, you know." Then I got kind of scared. So, I used to, beside trying to run the business, I used to string leis for tour companies just to make extra money so I could pay the bills. But then, it's self-taught. You know, you teach yourself. "Gee, maybe if I just buy this much." As the years go by, you learn. Oh, this month is a pretty good month so you always keep leis in your refrigerator because you're going to make. Like the September month, like I was saying, you kind of slow down. You know, you don't take as much. Because when you throw away, you don't throw away as much, you see. So, this is how we learned how to do it.

IH: When did you take over the lei business?

HK: About twenty years now [in 1965]. When my mother--my dad was retired. We moved out on our own. My mother said, "You're going to work for me?"

I go, "No, no. I have children to take care of now, Ma."

She said, "Okay, I retire. You take over the business."

So this is how I took over. It was a challenge. Because I says, "Ma."

She said, "No. You take over. You do your own. You learn." Which is good. Because when you do something on your own and you experience the hardship, you get very smart, you know.

This is what I tell my kids. I say, "You know, I like to help you because I know a little more than you do. But sometimes, it's good to learn hardship because you get more wise after that. But if you have everything in the palm of your hand, you never learn. You never learn. But if you get, 'Chee, I lost money.' You know, that type of thing, you going get really smart."

Because my two sons are in the wholesale flower business.

IH: Let me just stop this for a minute.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HK: My two sons are in the---they have a wholesale flower business in Provo, Utah. My oldest son lives in Orem and my second boy lives in Provo. But my husband always tell me, "Tell them what to do."

I said, "I don't know what to do. I've never been in wholesale." I said, "Let them go. They wanted to go into this, then they have to

learn."

And at first, "Oh, Ma, it's so hard, Ma."

I said, "Well, that's the way it is. That's the way anything. In life, nothing is easy. You have to work hard for it." And today, they've been in the business a year and a half now. They're still building the business up, but they learned a lot on their own. They know what they can do and what they cannot do, how much to take and how much not to take. And they done quite well for themselves.

My oldest son say, "Ma, I know what you mean when you said, 'You're going to work. You want your own business, you have to work, to work hard. Cannot be like your dad, you know. When come vacation time, he can take six-week vacation. If he's sick, he stay home, he still get paid.'" I said, "When you get your own business, you sick, you still got to go work, you know." (Chuckles) I said, "But that's the challenge in life. Life is a challenge. It's nothing just handed down to you, so simple." Experience in life is better. You experience hardship and you're so smart afterwards, say, "Oh, boy, I ain't doing that again." You know, that type of stuff. So, kind of passing on to my kids to be independent and to learn.

That's why there's another Hawaiians up there are doing. And then, he thought for awhile, "Chee, I'm kinda in the White country." (Chuckles) But my oldest son really has the gift of gab, you would call it. But, you know, he have so much aloha in him. Their business is called the Aloha Wholesale Floral. You know, the people, because he have so much aloha, they really love him. My second boy went and joined the brother. And he's learned. So, these kids were brought up with lot of aloha and love. You know, just that kind of kids. My oldest one, he's really. . . . I mean, you can close your eyes and you know he's Hawaiian. Because he looks pure Hawaiian. (Laughs) He's a mixture but he's really blalah, you know. He's really a Hawaiian. But I guess working with me and observing, that they learned how.

IH: Do you think that affected them towards owning their own business?

HK: I'm pretty sure. Because, see, he worked here for a while with Theo H. Davies and Foodland, like that. He had a pretty good job here, but he wanted something. So, he went back to Utah, because he married a Haole girl from Arizona. He started his business from scratch. Really. When we went up there, I looked at him, I said, "Boy, you're starving. No more money." And we kind of helped him out to help make few payments and all that. I said, "Well, that's what it is." But the second time we went to visit him, I couldn't believe how much he had jumped. And today, they've blossomed about maybe three times from the first time we seen them. So, they have about thirty-two stores, florists that they deal with. So, they really accomplished a lot. I'm pretty sure they got some of that from me and some of it, sales.

But the father always told him, "Be honest in your dealings. Be honest and show the people you care." That's the main thing in life. I think that's what these two boys have, that the people really enjoy them. The last year we went up there, and we went to the different florists with them. And they said, "Oh, we just love your sons." And naturally, we had to go to Dee Lite Bakery and buy some guava cake, and coconut cake (chuckles), and take it up there. He shared it with them and said, "This came from Hawai'i, you know." Kind of boosting Hawai'i. (Laughs) But, yeah, I'm pretty sure. I just guarantee that they got lot of these things from us. You know, we taught them.

IH: Did all of your children help out at the lei stand?

HK: Oh, yeah. They all. Even my second boy just been up there about two years. They always worked with us. Especially during graduation and May Day, like that, that kind of busy time. So, my second boy, Stuart, he said, "Oh, Ma, I sure miss graduation." You know, you work really hard, and it's just for about maybe three days. Just for the weekend, and that's all pau. Yeah, we all worked hard, but we all enjoyed. We all enjoyed. Because over here, I just bring the flowers home, we just put 'em all down on the floor, and we all string. The mother, I'm the one that pulls it down. I took my father's place. I pull down while everybody fill up needles. But it was a joy thing where we all sat down as a family. It was a family thing, you know. And it still is. Because my daughter, always, every summer she's there, and every weekend she's down at the lei stand helping me, even if she teaches school. And my sister's always down there with me. She's a schoolteacher, but . . .

IH: Do you think one of your children will carry on after you?

HK: Oh, I'm pretty sure my daughter will. Yeah, yeah. I always told her, I said . . .

IH: Is that important, to keep the lei business within the family?

HK: I think it is. It's a family tradition like. It's something that's always been, when I think way back. It's always been leis. That's why, everybody said, "Oh, this baby was born with a silver spoon in its mouth."

I said, "Oh, not me. I was born with a lei. Soon as I came out, there was a lei needle ready for me."

I even got my grandchildren. They all can sit down and string leis. Fill up needles. "Grandma, is this right?"

I go, "Yeah, yeah. String it like that."

And then, there's a joy. When you all work together as a family, there's a joy. I mean, there's fun, and there's time to quit. "Oh, everybody quit, let's eat."

It's always been like that, even when I was a young girl. My mother used to---because she used to have a big house in Kalihi. And that was when we used to have about fifty plumeria trees in my mother's back yard.

IH: In Kalihi?

HK: In Kalihi, yeah.

IH: Where was your house in Kalihi?

HK: Kam IV Road. Right on Kam IV Road. I remember, my kids used to climb the plumeria trees. Even I used to climb plumeria trees. In those days, when I was in high school, and even after I got married, I still was climbing plumeria trees for the lei stand. My kids, they tell, "Oh, Ma, remember when you used to climb the plumeria tree?"

I go, "Not anymore, though."

(Laughter)

HK: But we used to pick out all the plumerias from our own yard. You know, those days. There was always a family thing. My mother's house in Kalihi, that was always a family gathering. Even when my brother them got married and everybody moved out. Every once a month, we used to have a potluck, and whosever birthday is on that month, we all . . .

IH: Oh, celebrate?

HK: . . . gathered there and celebrate. Everybody's birthday for that month, because after a while, the family got too big. You cannot celebrate one kid's birthday. So, it was once a month gathering at my father's home. He loved his children. Portuguese are, you know, they're really close-bounded. (Laughs) My father was a big man. He had a real serious face, but he had a heart of gold. I think everybody was afraid of him, but I think my mother was the one that real tough lady, you know. Today, she's still. . . . The people at Lunalilo [Home], all those old folks over there, they love her because she loves her ukulele, and she's always singing. Always singing. When we go there . . .

IH: Did she used to take it to the lei stand with her?

HK: My mother?

IH: The ukulele?

HK: Oh, yeah. I tell her, "Ma, you're distracting the customers." If she got her ukulele over there, why, she's in the front dancing. I said, "Oh, boy. Ma, I going charge for your entertainment."

(Laughter)

HK: She was always that type for just singing and. . . . Like my Auntie Sophie was more on the business. My Auntie Sophie was a business lady. My mom was a business lady, but she was a happy-go-lucky kind of business lady. Really sing and dance. Like today, still the same. If we take our ukulele over there, she says, "Oh, kanikapila," and she's going.

(Laughter)

HK: Yeah, yeah.

IH: So, she's happy at Lunalilo Home?

HK: She's happy. When she's with people that really. . . . It was hard for her as the years went by. Because we couldn't converse with her. Because she like to talk Hawaiian, which is very sad that we never learned. We lost, you know.

IH: You didn't learn any Hawaiian?

HK: No. Very little. You know, just that ordinary . . .

IH: Didn't she talk to you at home?

HK: Not so--she talked to my grandfather when he was alive. Both of them used to talk a lot. And was always so pretty to us, but we never made any effort to learn, which is too bad. So, she couldn't converse, so when she went to Lunalilo, she was really happy. When we go to see her, she can't remember us too well. But you can just tell by her complexion and her looks that she. . . . I say, "Oh, Mama, you and I should exchange places because over here is so peaceful and you look. . . ." She look so pretty. Her complexion, and so relaxed. I said, "The outside world is tense, you know."

(Laughter)

HK: "Oh, come, come. Plenty room." She said, "Plenty room."

(Laughter)

IH: So when she got old, she was talking more Hawaiian than English?

HK: Yeah. But then, she was talking a lot when she first went there. Because you have quite a few that talk back in Hawaiian. But this last visit we went, about couple of weeks ago, I don't see the two ladies that used to talk to her. So, she's doesn't speak that much now. When you don't have the companion to talk about, so you know. . . . But that was a joy, though.

IH: So, what was your school life like?

HK: My school life? Was good.

IH: What school did you attend?

HK: After Damon Tract Elementary, went to Fern School. After Fern School in Kalihi, went to Kalākaua [Intermediate], and then to Farrington [High School]. I graduated from Farrington. I was on the quiet side. Too quiet, I guess. Then I said, "Oh, I have to change." So when I came senior year, I got little bit more aggressive.

IH: Were you able to participate in school functions and socials and things like that?

HK: Well, yeah, I was one of the song leaders for football games. I became one of the ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] sponsors. That was all during my senior year. During my senior year I was the May Queen for 1951. May Queen for Farrington. So, I had an exciting senior year in high school.

IH: And your lei selling didn't take it away?

HK: No, no, no. We always work part-time, but I didn't really help my mother, because my mother was sick during that time. So what we did, was help my auntie. But our stand was still there. When I graduated from high school, my mother went to tell Auntie Sophie that--she used to call me "Haliaka." "Haliaka pau school. So she's going come run the business." Because my mother was going through the change, so she was very sickly then. But the only way we went down is to work with my Auntie Sophie. But our stall, Harriet's Lei Stand, was still there. So when I graduated from high school, then we ran it completely. In between my high school years, for that three years, we just worked down there part-time with my auntie. Wasn't really part-time. We was always there working. (Chuckles) But when I graduated from high school, my mother said, "You go. No need to go school anymore. You finished school already."

I go, "All right."

She said, "You go run the business."

I go, "Okay." So, that's how . . .

IH: Did you want to go to further education?

HK: I really didn't think about it. Because I was too close to my parents, to my mother and father. I really seen that they needed me, then. My mother needed someone to help with the business. I knew. I knew the business because I always worked with my mom. So, I said, "Oh, okay." This is how it all started more seriously.

And my youngest brother Clarence, that was his life. I mean, he was there all the time. He was a big man. He had so much customers. But during that time, I don't think we made too much money, because

he had too much aloha. He just always gave, and gave, and gave. I said, "Clarence, we have to make money, (chuckles) you know." But he had a lot to offer. See, my brother was just as big as my son. More big, in fact.

IH: (Chuckles) You know, I notice now, down at the lei stands, there are a lot of hired workers.

HK: Mm hmm [yes], part-time.

IH: When did that start?

HK: Oh, chee, long time. Maybe about seven years.

IH: Was that before you moved to the present stand?

HK: Yeah, yeah, mm hmm. But then, you get one come in. I have two that come in and earn, but those are practically my hānai daughters. Because I took care them--you know, when they came from the Philippines, one of 'em, that I kind of helped them in and took care them. So, they really come down to help me because they appreciate. So, they all call me "auntie." There's a family tie. But there's one that I have a part-time job.

(HK's son and granddaughter enter. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

IH: I was wondering, because, before, was always family taking care of the stands, and then now, there's hired workers. What created the need to start hiring outsiders?

HK: Well, the kids go to college already, you see. My kids started to go to college, so they're not home. To go to college, and plus, after a while, you get little old. (Chuckles) And you get tired. Because it's a seven-day job. I guess we're not built like our parents where they can go, go, go, go, go. Now days, we get tired fast. Just to get the rest, too, you hire part-time workers to help you out. But afterwards, I guess there's so much love like I said, that these girls are more like a family than they are workers. But this is the reason. One of the reasons is that because our kids started to go to college. So we needed to hire part-time workers to help.

IH: Has that changed the business in any way?

HK: No, it hasn't. Really hasn't. I guess, we teach the girls that there's still love. They get to learn to accept our culture more. They never understood because they. . . Well, lot of these girls, they come down, their husbands are in the military. So, they're here only for two, three years. So, they come just to look for part-time jobs. But then, experience is good for them and good for us. But then, they learn how to accept our way of living and they learn to give aloha like we have. So, this is, I guess, they learn our culture more, too. But this is why we had to get. . . Some,

because of sickness. You can't do as much as you really want to.

IH: But I notice most of the hired workers are Filipinos.

HK: Mm hmm [yes].

IH: Why is that?

HK: It's because they're the only ones that really want to work. We did have quite a few Hawaiian girls, but I guess they want more out of life than just to sit down. Because it's just a sit-down job. It's a tiring job. A lot of people said, "Oh, you have such a easy job. You sit down all day." But you don't realize it's very tiring. It's very hard on your back to sit all day and string. In fact, just to sit all day. You don't have to string, if you just sit all day, it's hard. We did have some Hawaiian girls come down, but they want something more exciting. These Filipino girls that come down to work, they're very good workers. Some are there to really work with you and some are not really. They come just to kill time. So, if you do come across some real good girls, they appreciate you, then you can really tell them. I talk to the girls that come. Gradually, they change. The girls leave, and you get new girls come in. They gradually know about the business and the aloha that we have. This is why we have, I think, all the way down the line, we have Filipino girls working. It's because they're willing to work, they're willing to help you.

It's sad, though. We tried to get some Hawaiian girls, but they want more because they call it, oh, such a stale job. (Chuckles) You sit down all day, which is true. It's not an easy job to sit down all day. If it's busy, it's fun. It's even more fun. Oh, when it's busy, you feel you have all the excitement to work. But when it gets slow, it gets to be a drag. I guess like any business. Any business you have or you work in, when it's slow, it's just boring. And when it's busy, you get excited because you move around. You know, you're doing something. But if it's slow, like now it's slow, September month is slow, it's just a drag, you know. When I go down, I just want to just get out of there.

(Laughter)

HK: I guess it's like any business.

IH: Is there an art to stringing leis?

HK: I think there is. I'm pretty sure there is because you can make all different kinds of style. You gradually learn, and you have to make different types. I don't do very good in haku lei, but that's so pretty. My daughter does quite well, and my sister. They make beautiful haku lei. There's lot of times people like that, not the lei itself but just for the head. People just enjoy that. That's one thing. For that, you have to have patience. I guess I've been stringing leis so long, I like the kind that you finish fast, you know.

(Laughter)

HK: But when you get through with a haku, it's so beautiful, all your work involved is worth it. But like I say, I like to string with the needles, because you fill up two long needles, and you finish the lei. But there is an art. There is an art, because as the days go by, the years go by, there's always something different. They're made different, then you add little different kind of flowers. There is. No matter who makes--even the haku lei. Whoever makes it, they all have their own ideas. You know, what to put in and how to do it. And then, they look different. I guess, to everybody's taste. Like our double tuberose itself is very popular now. It's strung round. Before, was only plain double tuberose. Now, they make a spiral out of it. The spiral, where the thing goes right around the lei, and it's strung in now. And then, the creation. Yeah, it is. People, customers, come, "How do you do that? How do you string it?" It is art. It is imagination. When you sit down and stringing, you can just put flowers together and create. Whatever's coming out, coming out.

IH: I would assume that growing up with the stringing of the leis that that would grow inside of you.

HK: It does.

IH: But what about the hired workers? Do they also have that creativity in them?

HK: Yeah, they get creative, too. They get. Because they work. You know why they can get creative? Because they get to love to doing it, you see. But if you're a worker down there and you just stringing, it's just a job, then you can't be creative. But when you go down there and you get the love for stringing, yeah. Lot of these girls, like the hānai girl that I have, she can be so creative. She look at it, "Oh, maybe I'll try it this way." And when she's finished, "Oh, Auntie, how's this?"

I tell her, "Gosh, that's so pretty." You have to have the love for it to be able to really make it just gorgeous, you know. I know when I was young, the blue hydrangeas and the pansies, that was the prettiest leis. But we used to have to tie it into little bundles, like the. . . . Okay, they're all little flowers, eh? So, we used to tie 'em with the string and then cut little bundles of the pansies, and then, the blue hydrangeas. That used to be so pretty, but now you don't have the pansies and the blue hydrangeas. The flowers are all different kind. To me, it's more commercial kind of flowers. You know, not from the back yard like. Grown for commercial use.

IH: Do you think before days had more variety of leis?

HK: Today, they have more. Yeah, yeah, in those days, we had different kinds. I don't know, I can't think of--there's an orange flowers that's really skinny and long. People have them grown on the fence

or . . .

IH: Yeah, that vine.

HK: The vine, yeah. Long, orange one. [Common names are orange trumpet vine, flame flower, sweetheart vine, and huapala.]

IH: I don't know the name, but I know they used to use that for leis . . .

HK: We used to use that in our leis, in our plumeria mixture. We used to use that. Those are one of the flowers that we used to go on the highway and pick up. But like I say, no more flowers. But now, you buy the flowers. Even bougainvillea, you can't pick up. Would you want to buy bougainvillea? And they make beautiful leis. Bougainvillea and crown flower. Those are the old-time flowers. We used to mix the bougainvillea with the crown flowers. So pretty. I know, during graduation, there's one family, the Hanawahines at Waimānalo. When they come to the graduation to sell, they have all these crown flower with the bougainvillea. I looked and my thoughts go back when I was a young girl. That's when all we used to string that.

But now, the main flowers are tuberose, carnations. But lot of the old flowers are coming back. Like the puakenikenī. For a while, you never heard of that. You know, it just dropped out of sight. Now, the people, [puakenikenī] are very much in demand. Not really demand, but people ask for that. Puakenikenī and the kīkā lei, and what you call that swamp flower? Kukunaokalā. You know, all those flowers are gradually coming back. The maunaloa flower. That was one of the flowers we used to pick up a lot, too. They used to grow wild on a vine. That, I remember stringing as a young girl. We stringing, and then we used to put the plaster (tape that we used to use for bandage) in the center of the lei, the flower. And we used to get the petals and stick it on. You see, the maunaloa was small little ones like that (about one inch). You ever seen the maunaloa lei, the purple one?

IH: I've seen the maunaloa lei.

HK: Yeah, okay. After we string it side by side, look like a centipede. We used to run a thin plaster right in the center of the lei, and then we used to get the petals, and one at a time, stick the petals on the plaster to hold it down. So, that's another flower. But you see, then after a while . . .

IH: Do they still put that plaster in between?

HK: I'm not sure how to string it now, because we don't have that. It's kind of hard to find. Only certain people can get it.

IH: Yeah, you hardly see it.

HK: But these type of flowers are gradually coming back. For a while, for years, you don't hear about puakenikenī and kīkā lei was

really. . . . But now, you hear. There's a lot. People call you, "You have puakenikeni? Is it all right?"

I go, "Oh, that's pretty." I know it's a strong-smelling flower, though, oh. (Chuckles)

IH: Yeah, it is.

HK: But these things are gradually coming back. It's so pretty, though. All these old flowers coming, it's so pretty. I'm trying to think what else. That's about the flowers that we had. You know, that kind of flowers. I don't know if you've seen the blue lilies. It comes on a little stalk. It look like a stephanotis, but little smaller. And they grown on little trees like. Not trees, but we used to use that as a blue lei like. That's pretty. But these are the kind of flowers we used to use when I was young. Now, the main flower's tuberose. Ginger. Well, ginger's always been around.

IH: So, when did you move to Kailua?

HK: Let's see, my youngest boy was first grade, I think. About twenty years. He's twenty-five now. About twenty years.

IH: What made you folks leave Kalihi?

HK: Well, my kids, my two older ones were teenagers. They said, "Oh, Ma." Because everybody, all the cousins were all living on their own. We had this house already, but we had it rented out. So they said, "Oh, why don't we live by ourselves." So, this is how we moved to Kailua. When we moved here, we built this big patio. And it was a football field for my three boys (chuckles) and the father, naturally.

IH: Does your husband help at the lei stand?

HK: Mm hmm [yes]. Certain times, he come down and help. Weekends, he go down and help me. But he think he getting old, too, eh?

(Laughter)

HK: He'll be fifty-five pretty soon. But yeah. When he was courting me, I'd be sitting on one side of the table, and he's the other side. On the top of the table, it was full of flowers. So he used to tell my kids, "Yeah, I used to hold your mother's hand across the table."

(Laughter)

HK: Cannot get close because get too much flowers to string. Yeah, when we were going together, I mean, he had to come over the house because we just had tons of flowers.

IH: Did he help you?

HK: He helped a little, but then, that was, "Oh, man, am I going to marry into this lady's. . . ."

(Laughter)

HK: Oh, shucks. Yeah, so for as long as we've been married--thirty-four years in November, and he's seen flowers for maybe thirty-six years because we went together two years. (Chuckles) So, he tell the kids, "All I seen is flowers, flowers. Man, your mother, boy."

IH: What does he do?

HK: He works at telephone company. Cable splicer. He works there thirty-four years now. Maybe next year, he'll retire. (Chuckles) He don't want to wait till too late.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

IH: Okay, can you describe for me the first lei stand the state [territory] built for you? The grass shack?

HK: Made of--well, they built it with wood, but on the outside, they put coconut leaves which was woven together. This is how it looked, so it really looked like a grass shack. It was pretty. On the top of the roof, they did have coconut leaves, but as the weather gradually deteriorated that. So they put just regular roof. But on the side they still had that coconut leaves which made it so real. That was the first one . . .

IH: Did they put refrigerators for you?

HK: No, no, no. We had old reefers.

IH: Icebox?

HK: Icebox and old freezers. We had to have ice. We didn't have refrigerators like we have now. In fact, the stands were so small, you couldn't put anything in the stalls. So, the iceboxes were all in the back--on the side and in the back of the stands. When we first moved there, my auntie and my mother took pictures. Too bad I don't have. Where they were telling the state [territory], hoo, cannot move around. Because my mother was a big lady, and even my auntie. They showed that they were kind of squeezing in the stall. In fact, they took pictures. You didn't see any in the newspaper?

IH: I didn't see any of that . . .

HK: Yeah, they took pictures. The Star-Bulletin came down and took pictures, and then they showed them trying to squeeze in a stall. Even Martina Makaiwi, her mother Agnes. She show, because that's a real Hawaiian. She was a big, tough lady. Like one of those queens. But they showed that, chee, they were big people but you can barely

make it in and out. That was one of the squawks that they had when they built those grass shacks for us. But then, we stayed with it. They stayed with it. Because of that, they built in the back two lanais like where we can go behind there and string. Because the stands were so small, you couldn't have your family come down and help you string. Because, you know, two people in there, that was it, because you had to hang your leis on the outside and in the inside. Then, there's a bench, and that's it. You can't move. So, the iceboxes were all outside, and then there's a shack in the back where you string your leis. It was small.

IH: So were all the lei sellers from all the different stands all stringing together in the back there?

HK: Yeah, well, whoever brought their family down, they'd string. We would all go in the back there and have a rap session really. You know, talk and string our leis. Then we would go back to the stand. We'll have one or two in the front to watch the stall. But in the back in that shack, this is where we. . . . Because we couldn't all fit in the stand. It was too small. Really too small. But I know that they took pictures of them, showing, ho, my Auntie Sophie trying to get in like. So, that was nice.

IH: When you moved to the grass shacks, did business improve from when you were on the cars?

HK: Well, yeah, I guess it did. Then we were more noticeable then. I remember, one year, the president [of the United States] came up. Can't remember what president came. And we all walked across the street, because there's only one way to the airport, Lagoon Drive, and we all waved American flag to him. I can't remember what president came in then. You see all these policemen on the side. Even my grandfather was there because he was very much strong yet. And he's walking with his crooked leg. He's walking with his leg because he was partially crippled like, with a big American flag.

IH: Did they have commercial flights at that time?

HK: Not too much.

IH: So was your business still military?

HK: No, no. Gradually, they had the smaller planes, prop planes. So, besides the Mars, then they gradually had flights go in. So, we had people go back and forth. And then, they knew about us then. You know, gradually know about the lei sellers. Because we made it so where we got advertised that we were there. But then, they couldn't miss us, because they had to pass in front of the lei stand. But lot of people--even like today--lot of people pass us and they go, "What is that?" Because there's a lot of new faces that don't know where we are or if we exist. So, with the new opening of the road [freeway off-ramp] up [above the lei stands] that goes directly to the overseas, we going get missed quite a bit, you know. A lot,

because that goes straight to the outgoing [overseas] flights. So, now, we have to work all over again and get the people to know how to come to us again. So, it's going to be little hard on us again.

Because the walkway to the lei stand is not much. One day, I was watching this tourist, he had a cart. You know, they have this cart at the airport. And he had all his bags there. He couldn't come over the parking lot. He was trying to move that big cement boulder and had a hard time. Then when he came across the street, here was all these plants. So, we had asked them. We said, you know, to make a way where these--lot of people use those things--if they could come through. Because that's difficult with the overpass there, and lot of new things happening. But I guess we have to kind of teach the people how to get to us again (chuckles).

IH: So, does your business fluctuate with tourism?

HK: Yeah, it does. Because lot of the tourists, we call them the walking customers. Because lot of them ride the bus, and the bus never stops at the lei stand. They go directly to the airport. They have to walk back to the lei stand, and lot of them don't know. Some of them would come, and they don't know how to get back. Oh, they come there real tired, they said, "We went way around."

So, when going back, we say, "Cut across the parking lot." But this is actually the only way we can get the customers through, well, walking from the airport. Because majority of them ride the bus. There's just so many that rent their own car. And if they rent their own car, they still not able to come to us because they're more concerned about returning the car. If they do stop and buy, they go, "How do we get to return the car?" (Chuckles)

IH: What about local people? Do they stop and buy when they meet their friends?

HK: Oh, yeah. Local people still, yeah. The military buys a lot, too, but see, local people are not only Hawaiians really. There're lot of Caucasian that live here for years, so they Hawaiians, too, you know. So, they said, "That's what we get from living in Hawai'i." You get all these people who so jealous of you, they love paradise. (Chuckles) But no, they have lot of local people that come and buy. And lot of new people that's just learning. Like the military people, some of them are just learning about the custom of Hawai'i--when people arrive, you give 'em lei. And what kind of lei do you give the men, and what kind of lei do you give to the lady. You know, these types here. I like to tease them. I said, "You're a kama'āina or malihini?"

They go, "We don't know."

I said, "How long you've been here?"

"Oh, we just got here."

I go, "Oh, you're still a [malihini], then."

They said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "If you eat raw fish and poi, you're a [kama'āina]."

"Oh, yeah, we heard that phrase before."

But these people, sometimes, they just come here, and then they have visitors already. So, they really don't know.

"What we supposed to do? We heard that you get a lei for someone coming. But when I came, nobody gave me a lei."

I said, "Well, you're going to get more people visit you now that they know that you're in Hawai'i."

Yeah, they normally like to give them the aloha spirit and give them a lei. Then, they look through all that. You don't have to give them anything that's really big when they come in. Because they're just going to use it, and I said, "It doesn't last forever." I says, "The main thing is just putting your lei on them."

And then, the plumeria lei is a big hit, though. Yeah, people love plumeria. Especially for the first-timers. They said, "We got to have plumeria." They like the smell . . .

IH: Why do you think that's so?

HK: They like the scent to it. Before, when I was young, they did have-- they call it a graveyard flower, but they did have it. Because before, when I was young, that's what we had. We used to buy our plumeria from Kawaiaha'o Church. You know the graveyard over there? The man that used to pick it for my mother and my Auntie Sophie, his name was Hanawahine. And they were tiny. Tiny, yellow with darker yellow shade inside. Maybe that's why the people always say, "Oh, that's graveyard flower, you know." But then, people never planted or never did it commercially like they do now. Now, yeah, people grow 'em by the acres. The flowers are not like what we used to get before from Kawaiaha'o. I think that's where they get the slang for 'em. I say, "That's not graveyard flower. That's a beautiful flower." And now, as the years went by, they have so much varieties of colors, it's unbelievable. Beautiful colors. They're crossbred and all that. Just gorgeous. People enjoy it. No matter what, plumeria is the flower.

IH: Why do you think they like that better than the tuberose?

HK: I think there is a difference in scent. There is a difference, you know. Plumeria, to me, have a softer smell than the tuberose. Tuberose has a sharp--I don't know if that's the way to identify it or what, but plumeria, when you smell it, it's nice.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 14-5-1-85; SIDE ONE

[While changing the tape, IH asks HK to talk about her childhood days in Lā'ie.]

HK: Well, during the month of June, they have what we call Lā'ie Day. It's a festivity where they have the hukilau and they have a luau. In that day, they used to have a boathouse. In the boathouse used to have all the nets for the hukilau. And this, my grandfather's brother Hamana Kalili, he was always the king of Lā'ie. Being his granddaughters, too, my cousin Queenie [Ventura Dowsett] and my cousin Charlotte [Ventura Fuller] and I were always his princesses. We felt like really princesses, just sitting on the float and going through Lā'ie Town. It was a beautiful town then. Not like now. Now, it's so modern. In those days, the homes were all Hawaiian-looking. You know, they have those big ball of--from the ocean. And all of these . . .

IH: Oh, the glass balls?

HK: Glass balls. Lot of people had it in there hanging in front of their homes. So, make it look so Hawaiian. And then, lot of the homes had the breadfruit trees. And really, my grandfather Hamana's house had about three trees. His house would go directly to the Mormon temple, would face directly to the Mormon temple.

IH: Was that celebration church-related?

HK: No, it wasn't church-related. It was a Lā'ie Day. It was something that they always had. I don't know why they stopped it. But it was always celebrated in the month of June during the summer. They had, oh, a big luau which was held at the boathouse. It was right on the beach. The gathering was just fabulous. All the old folks all came out and supported this thing here. We did have lot of tourists come down and get tickets for the luau, yeah. And then, we have the family would go out and lay the nets. All my tūtū, my Tūtū Hamana and his boys would go out on the boat and make a big circle with the net. And then, he come out the other end of the ocean. And then, we're all standing. One group's on one side, the other group hold the beginning of the net. When he get off the boat, he said, "Huki." And when he said huki, you better huki. Pull the net in. I never seen so much fish as I did then. Always came in, the fish came in. But there was people, just loads of people.

While I was thinking about pulling the net, I thought of my grandmother right then and there. Because when I was even younger than that, was before they had the celebrating of the Lā'ie Day, we had hukilau then for the family. My mother's mother, they knew when she was in the water. Because when they pull up the nets and they look at the

akules, no more heads. My Tūtū Hamana used to yell, he said, "Auwē! Kamakea in the water." They used to call her "Kamakea." In the water. Because my grandmother, that was her fish. The head of the akule. And then, every now and then, they used to see just the body, no more head. They knew that she was in the water. This is one thing that I never forget they talking about. And then, she used to come out and laughing. My grandmother was a big lady. She was short, maybe about five [feet], four [inches], but she was well over 200 pound. She was a stunted lady like, but beautiful. This is why, when I talk about the hukilau that they had during that month of June, I thought about her. Because they used to know that she was the one that always ate the head of the akule.

(Laughter)

HK: But that was a big festival that they had when I was a young girl.

IH: About how old were you when . . .

HK: I was maybe about fourteen [1947]--thirteen, fourteen, around the teenage years. So we looked forward. When almost pau school, oh, we looked forward for that, where we can go to Lā'ie because there was big celebration.

IH: How long did the celebration last?

HK: That lasted just a weekend. You know, it was a big thing for that day when they have the hukilau. And afterwards, they had the luau. Just entertainment. Among my grandfather and his brothers, it was a funny thing; but during that time of this hukilau, they were farmers, too. They planted watermelon. They competed with one another, who grew the largest watermelon. When I think about that Lā'ie, that's what the thing about they competed who grew the biggest. And you know, the biggest, oh gosh, I can't remember how big. I've never seen watermelon grow like that. But in my grandfather's family, there were about five boys, and they were known as the Kalili brothers. The Kalili brothers never fooled around. Nobody fooled around them because they were tough men. They were big, big Hawaiians. Only my grandfather wasn't. He wasn't the muscle-bound type. My grandma called him more of a cruiser than--more of a politician like, which he was. He liked to run for office. And he liked to run his own business. I think this is where we got some of our business traits from. Because he opened a store.

IH: Oh, in Lā'ie?

HK: In Lā'ie, yeah. I can't remember what office he ran for. He ran for office, too. He wasn't like his brothers. His brothers were strong men. They all get together, and one brother would lift up the back of the car. He was known to us as Tūtū Kule. If you want your tires changed and it's a back tire, he'll go behind and lift your car up till you finish change your tire. That's how tough he was. So when they said the Kalili brothers are coming, watch out.

(Chuckles) Everybody go, "Oh, no, no." When I think about them, they were the tough men. They were strong guys. They'll lift up the train tracks. Get something, lift it up. These were the kind of persons they were. And yet, when we used to go there as kids, we could eat all the watermelon we like. They'd fill up our trucks. (Laughs)

But you know, now that I'm talking about watermelon, when we were young girls then, my mother used to sell leis at the boats like that. To make extra money, we used to go down to Lā'ie, get all the watermelons, and we used to go around sell watermelon, too. You see, so I guess we were really business people from very young. And we used to go house to house, sell watermelon. Now that I think about it, my Auntie Sophie used to get her station wagon, fill up the wagon. We used to have our car and fill up our car. We used to go sell watermelon. I think, chee, our business traits go back way back (chuckles) now that I recall, yeah. Because my grandfather, yeah.

And he was a superintendent of the road. He worked for the city and county. And then he became a bishop for the Mormon Church, Kaka'ako ward. They lived in Kaka'ako for a long time. But he was a bishop there in 1935, I think. I have a paper from him when he was called from Salt Lake City, signed by the president of the Mormon Church that they called him to be bishop of the ward.

IH: So, was your family always active in the Mormon Church?

HK: Yeah, we were all, yeah. He [Gustave K. Kalili] loved people. I think this is where we got all our love from. Because he took care all the widows in the church. And then, as kids we used to. . . . He used to make laulau. We used to go and sell laulau. Laulau and boiled peanuts. We used to pack the peanuts in the package. We used to go out with him to sell. And same time, he used to, when the widows no more money, well, he give the widows the laulau (chuckles) free. Oh, yeah, now that I think about it. We were very businesslike. Not only selling leis, but do otherwise when the boats never came in. They sell laulau, make laulau. Yeah, that's what it was. I think that's it. That's what I remember him like.

My grandmother was a lei seller, but yet she was a quilt maker. Beautiful work. And this is how my mom . . .

IH: Hawaiian quilt?

HK: Hawaiian quilt. This is how my mom and my Auntie Sophie used to sit down with my grandmother and quilt when they were young. They used to quilt for that Fred Woolsey. He was a member of the Mormon Church, too. They used to quilt for his wife. She always taught me. Told me, "Sit down, sit down, so you learn how to quilt."

And I thought, "Oh, gosh." That was too much for me.

My mother, too, she worked in the Mormon Church. They have relief society (a woman's organization), and she was the president. She did a lot of quilting. Did a lot. They don't have it now. It's too bad. Everything is just so different. You know, don't have all that quilting. You probably find some, but in our family we don't have it since my mom can't do it. But one thing I'm really thankful for is that she finished my quilt before she was not able to quilt anymore. She finished my sister's and mine, and one for my daughter's . . .

IH: Oh, you're so lucky.

HK: Yeah. I'll show it to you afterwards. (Laughs) But this is a treasure. The saddest part is, when my grandmother died, she had a lot of quilts in her chest, but nobody knows where it went. I guess the only person that knows is the one that took it. (Chuckles) But we could never find out who took it. And my mom said had beautiful-- they had about six quilts in that chest. They could never find it. My mother felt kinda bad because one of the quilts was hers. But these are the things that I feel bad. Because I didn't have enough patience to sit down and really learn how to quilt. But my mother had all. She can sit for hours and just go over and over. Just finish one quilt, and oh. It takes a lot of patience. And you got to love doing the work. Like I said, when you do anything, you have to love doing it, if not, it'll be a chore to do. That was it.

IH: Do you think the big business of today has taken away from the lei sellers? You know, like the florists, like now they sell leis.

HK: Oh, yeah.

IH: And some of the hotels, they order their own leis for tours and things like that. Has that taken away from the lei sellers?

HK: Yeah, it is. That's a lot of competitive--like for graduation, they have the balloons and then they have all these knick-knacks. Before, when you sell leis for graduation, it was just leis. Now, when you sell leis for graduation, there's all kinds. All kinds you can think of. Everything is so modern. Now, they have great big balloons, and then they have little dolls that look like a graduate doll. I mean, there's so much, I go, "Wow." But I guess that's improvement, I guess. I don't know what you call it, but nothing stays the same year after year. But I don't think leis will ever fade away. It's too much joy in it.

But, yeah, we do lose a lot because all the florists make leis now. The tour companies all string their own leis. Before, they'll call you and string, but now they want you to give it to them really for the price they want. And it's not worth it. It's not worth the time and the effort. So, they all string their own leis. So, it's really entirely different now. So, now you just wait for whatever comes down to the lei shops. But then, you don't want to work too hard now, you know. (Laughs)

IH: Is it still a good business?

HK: It's still a good business, yeah. It is. Still a good business. I mean, we work so long at it and so hard that we made it what it is today. You have to work hard to make it up to par. Like we had one newcomer come in. They opened for two years and they couldn't. They said, "Well, how come?"

I said, "Listen." When they came in, they never knew nothing about the business. Never knew how to string, nothing. You see, they're real [malihinis] to this thing here. But they wanted miracle. I said, "You know, we work so hard to put ourselves where we are. We worked hard and it's been years and years."

"For how long?"

I said, "Maybe thirty-something, forty years."

"Oh, that long?"

I said, "Yeah. We didn't just come in like you and expect miracle. You ought to work at it." But they couldn't. They couldn't stand it, was just too much. So, they just gave up. So, now we have another Hawaiian there, but she's been stringing leis for a while, for long time. She knows. But you got to understand that. You make, you don't. You just got to save for the bad times. And then when you get good times, have a ball. (Laughs) But still save for the bad times.

IH: Do you have outside accounts? Charge accounts like that?

HK: I have one. And then sometimes every year, once a year, the state comes. That's too much humbug. Really, it's not worth it. At least, I don't think so. The paperwork. And then, sometimes you send them the bill and they don't come up with the money. So, I rather just everyday kind. You make, you make; you don't make, you don't make. Then you don't have to go through the hassle of sending the bill and wondering if. . . . Now, if you do have a call from the Mainland that they want some leis sent, I say, "You have to send us money first." Because there was a time when we sent the leis and no money come back. No matter if you call and write, there's no answer. So, we do come across people like that. I did have one maybe about a month ago for forty leis. He said, "Do you take a charge card?"

I go, "I don't. That's too much hassle. I don't want to work extra hard for it. Maybe if I was younger, I'd work extra hard, but now I don't want to."

He said, "Well, how am I going to get?"

I says, "I'm going to trust you. I'm going to send you the leis." I even have to pay for the shipping because it has to go on a Speedpak flight on Western Airlines. I said, "I'm going to send

you the leis. You pick it up. And I'm going to trust you for your payment."

He kind of hesitant, and he said, "You really?"

I said, "Yeah. I trust you."

Then he said, "Don't worry, you'll get your money."

That was about \$160, because \$45 alone, I had to dig out of my own pocket \$45 to pay for the freight. It goes on the Speedpak.

IH: Wow, ho, it's expensive.

HK: Yeah. No, it goes on a Speedpak, so it goes with the passengers. So this person on the other end have to go to the airlines to pick it up in the baggage claim area. Because they called Wednesday, they want to send Thursday for Friday, you see? I go, "Wow." So I told him how it has to go. And then he tell me about the charge card and all that. I go, "No, I don't take that because it's not worth my time and my headache. I'm just going to believe and trust you that you're going to pay me." And he send a check and he said, "Thanks a lot." (Chuckles) Sometimes you have to trust people. We even get some checks sometimes. You trust them wholeheartedly, and they have the checks but they don't have an account. (Laughs)

IH: Oh, they don't have money in the account?

HK: No, they don't even have an account. The account is closed. (Laughs) My husband said, "And you laugh about it?"

I said, "What I going do, cry?"

And then, you call 'em up, they don't live there anymore. (Laughs) You got to trust people. I said, "Well, you cannot say, oh. You can't do that. You have to understand, I'm like that." You look at the guy, he has such a nice face and you believe in him, and he come to be one of those nutsy guys. (Laughs) I said, "Oh, that's all right. I'll make 'em [the check] wallpaper." But you come across people like that. I told my husband, I said, "But not all people are like that. There's a whole bunch of good people. There is. The trouble with me, I like to look at people for their good than for their bad. Because when you look at people for their good, you become a good person. But if you go around and looking for the bad in everybody, oh, you get to be bad yourself."

So, I always tell my kids, I say, "Always smile. Always look at people and look for the good that they're doing." I said, "Then, you'll be a better person yourself."

IH: Mm hmm [yes], I believe that.

HK: Yeah. You can say, "That person this and that person that." And

then, pretty soon, you yourself are frowning. You frowning, and to me, that's not good. I mean, life is too short. You enjoy and be happy. I was reading the story about Cary Grant. You know, that actor? He told his daughter, she's a sophomore, I think, in college. He said, "Learn happiness because that's what counts more in life, is happiness. Learn what you have to learn, but always put happiness in front of you and your life will be worth living." When I read that, I thought, "That is super." That is so special in everybody's life. You know, to be happy. I know there's time that you sad, but you always have to think. . . .

Like when I went through this problem here [illness], there was time that I says, "I just rather die than go through this." Then I think to myself, I said, "By golly, Harriet, there's people worse off than you. And here, they're trying to be strong." I said, "How dare you." Oh, I pray to the Heavenly Father, and I says, "Forgive me. Just give me the strength that I really need to overcome all these things that I have." You know, that's what makes a person strong, to accept things. No such thing as "Well, how come I got sick?" But what makes you so special you not going get sick--everybody. You know, how come that other person didn't get it. I learned a lot. Since I've had this surgery, I've learnt a lot of life itself. Always be thankful for your life because it could be harder.

So my kids tell me, "How you, Ma?"

I go, "I'm fine."

They go, "No lie."

(Laughter)

HK: I said, "No, I'm fine. When you say you're fine, you will be fine. When you say you feel junk, then you going feel junk."

They said, "Oh, you all right, Ma."

(Laughter)

HK: That's a good way to put things, you know. My husband sometimes think I'm crazy. I said, "No. When you think about it, you think about it. Life is worth liking and not moaning or groaning over it. Because there's lot of people that is sad."

Like when my granddaughter was born, Down's Syndrome, my daughter cried, "How come me? I'm so young yet." She was in her twenties.

I said, "She's a gift from God, Leimomi. If you read about it, these children that come down like that, they will go directly back to Heavenly Father. They are not that kind of children that. . . . Like us, we're normal. We're going to be tested down here. These children, no. They will overpass that. They are choice spirits. When they leave this earth, they go right back to him. Now when we

are like we are, are we ready to go back?" You know, that kind of stuff. I said, "I don't know. When I think about it, did I do everything what I'm supposed to do?"

I'm glad we brought our kids up good. Because they're all good kids. My three sons all went on a mission for the Mormon Church. So, they turned out pretty good. But they're still vulnerable to be careful for their life. You know, there's no such thing that, "Oh, I went on a mission, I'm a good kid." I said, "There's always somebody that comes across you and tempt you and all that. That's to see how strong you are." Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's life. Oh, (chuckles) what else. We're talking about my kids now. Well, what else?

IH: Do you have any other memories of the lei stand or activities that you might have done with other lei sellers?

HK: No, only we had that opening. Every time we move from one area to the other area, we have a big luau. This last one, we had the governor [George Ariyoshi] over, which was very nice. Really good. I think the Star-Bulletin has some pictures of that, of the governor cutting the maile lei or something.

IH: Yeah, I would think so.

HK: That was nice. It's a good business.

IH: Do you remember when the Airport Lei Sellers Association formed?

HK: Oh, when we moved into that first building [in 1952]. They already selected a president. I think Martina's mom was the first president. I'm pretty sure of that, that she was.

IH: Why did they feel that they had to organize?

HK: I'm not sure. I guess, like we feel now, that we have to have a body where if anything goes wrong, we stand together as one. I think this is one of the reasons. Because Martina's mother was well educated. In fact, even Martina them, they all went to really good schools. But she was well educated, and she was not going to let anyone pull anything over the Hawaiians. She was a fighter. She was that kind of person. She was very good.

IH: And that's Agnes Makaiwi?

HK: Agnes Makaiwi, yeah. She was that kind of person. So it was good to have her because she was the spokesman. And when she spoke, she made sure everybody heard. So, as the years go by, now we have a younger group taking over [the Department of Transportation], so the challenge are more great now. Because maybe they can beat us, and maybe they can't. But what we all talked about is, we stick together. We're not going to let them do that to us. After all, we're the ones that really started this business here.

IH: Oh, you mean, there's a younger group taking over the [Department of Transportation]?

HK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. There was time that they wanted to bid it out [in 1970]. You know, bid out the whole area. That would just dump us out because we don't have millions like how they bid. You know, like the inside [of the terminal building]. We don't have that kind of money. So, there was time. We all got together and put our thoughts and our prayers together, and say, "You're not going to do that to us." So, we still have that. This is why the association, where we can pull together in case something does happen. Because my husband said, "What if they take it away?"

I said, "We're not going to just sit back and give in. We're going to put a fight. Even if we have to go all over the front page. We're going to do that. After all, it's true we never went to college, but we're pretty smart. We're pretty smart Hawaiians. We work hard to where we're at. And then, we're going to have these young generations that just come over here and say, 'You got to do this and you got to do that?' No, no, no. They can't do it."

We are kind of well prepared for something like this. My husband go, "You sure you sure?"

I said, "I'm positive. Maybe we look like we can't, but, ey, our voices will be heard. After all, we worked hard."

He look at me, just laugh. He said, "Oh, you no have voice."

I go, "Yeah? You don't know. Anything happen, my voice shall be. The Good Lord will bring 'em out."

(Laughter)

HK: No, I think this is why the association, so that we have a body in case anything. Because pretty soon [in December, 1985] we have to have our leases renewed. So if anything that we don't like, we'll be there as a group fighting for our rights. That's what it is. I think it's only fair.

I don't know what else. (Chuckles)

IH: I think that's all the questions I have, unless you have anything else to add.

HK: No, that's it. Just that I enjoy this business. In fact, I love it because I've been at it so long. It's a peace. When I go down there, I'm tired. I'm stringing leis, but it's something pleasant to look at. I look outside, and I see the people buying leis and smiling. I think this is what life is all about. You meet all kind of people. You meet some real hard to understand people, but majority of the people are always nice. You nice to them, they'll always come back. Yeah. I think that's it. That's the enjoyment of

selling leis.

IH: Okay, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

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